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Mapping the Broads

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1. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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Mapping the Broads was developed as part of the Heritage Lottery funded 'Water, Mills and Marshes' project, part of the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme. Brewerton produced work over a three-year period that documented the landscape of the Norfolk Broads, centred on Wheatfen Broad, and working with communities that live in the area.

Wheatfen Broad, recognised as a site of Special Scientific Interest, was established as a nature reserve by the writer and naturalist Ted Ellis, who studied and documented its ecosystem for over 40 years. Research involved using the Ted Ellis archive, and his published writings as well as combining comments and sightings recorded in Wheatfen visitors' books with observation drawing, aerial perspectives and Google Maps© references. The location drawings identify the layers of the landscape, the network of dykes and channels, with drawn marks that convey grassland, wetland, marsh and meadow.

The work developed a visual language that condenses different types of data into a historical visual record that maps both wildlife and human interaction with the riparian landscape of Wheatfen Broad. The drawing style was developed to encourage close looking to tempt viewers to explore the dense vegetation and wetland landscape as a naturalist would by spotting and cataloguing flora and fauna. It encourages new audiences and new ways to engage with landscape, helping to address what Louv (2005) has described as 'nature deficit disorder'.

Brewerton applied this process to a collaborative art and community project, 'Reconnecting with Nature', with Acle Academy pupils to record their experiences of the Broads area of Halvergate Marsh through drawing and writing. It aimed to research and raise awareness of the physical, psychological and educational benefits of a creative interaction with the natural world.

The work was exhibited, available online and subsequently became the visual dimension of the Wheatfen Nature Reserve website.

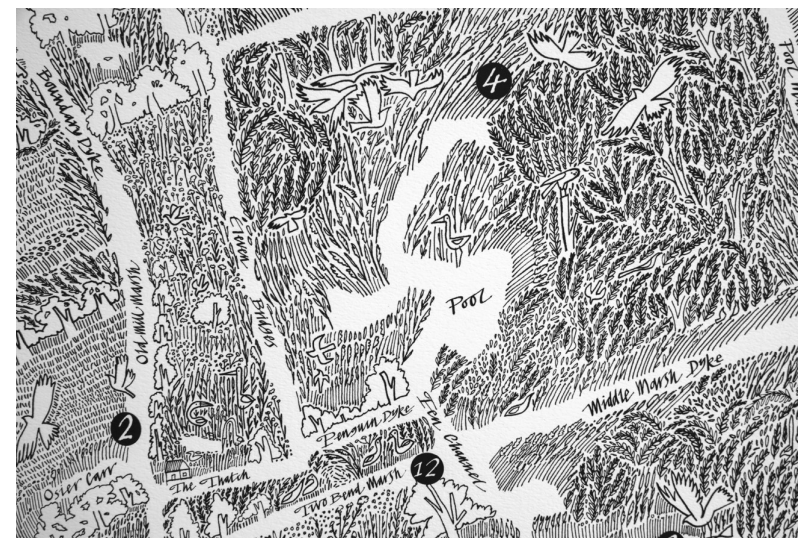


Fig.1 A Visual map of the Wheatfen Broad Visitors' book, June 2011-2018, detail.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS

Brewerton's research developed the observational method used by the naturalist Ted Ellis, recorded in his journals and publications, as well in the Ellis archive at the Wheatfen Nature Reserve. Brewerton was also influenced by Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2010).

Central to the research were the sightings and comments Brewerton found in the pages of the Wheatfen Broad visitors' books. He began to chart the numbers of varied species of birds and wildlife spotted in particular parts of the broad as recorded in the visitors' books over a number of years, eventually focusing on the month of June from 2011-2018 as this is the busiest period for visitors to the Broad. These visitor book commentaries were visualized and mapped with observational drawing in the specified locations of the nature reserve in the sketchbook phase of the project. In charting the recordings, Brewerton used a script that reflects the shape and movement of reeds and sedge in the Fen, informed by his observational drawing.

The research also used Google Maps© references, satellite views and aerial drone photographs to inform how the landscape was shaped over time by conservation, land and flood management. The network of dykes and channel shapes that form areas of carr were combined with drawn marks to convey grassland, wetland, marsh and meadow, for example, the patterns of reed beds.

This led to the development of interpretive maps of information and experience that combine visitor book commentary, observational drawing research that Brewerton developed on location, and the layers and the shape of the landscape from a number of viewpoints. The detailed and intricate drawings also tempt the viewer to explore the dense vegetation and wetland landscape in the same way a naturalist would spend time spotting and cataloguing the ecosystem of the Broad, for example 'Coot in Penguin Dyke'.

Brewerton applied this process to a collaborative art and community project, 'Reconnecting with Nature', with Acle Academy's Year Eight students to record their experiences of the Broad's area of Halvergate Marsh through drawing and writing. The project aimed to research and raise awareness of the physical, psychological and educational benefits of a creative interaction with the natural world. It engaged school pupils from the urban fringes of the Broad's to observe and creatively respond to the environment using a range of methods and data, and thereby discover or rediscover a rural landscape on their doorstep. The project represented a new perspective on teaching creative subjects as a means to engage with other academic subjects such as science, history and natural history. The project resulted in a publication of the pupils' work that took the form of a visitors' book and a film that recorded their experiences.

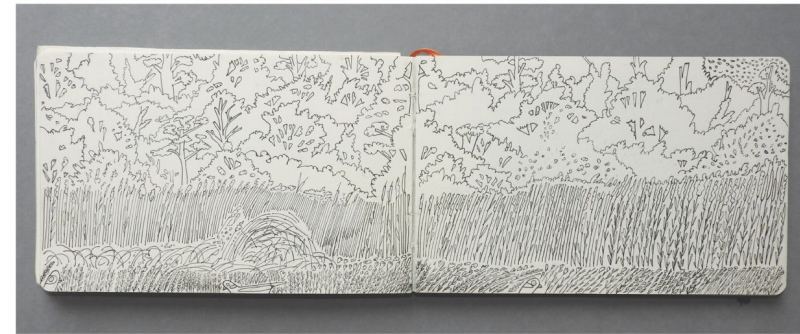
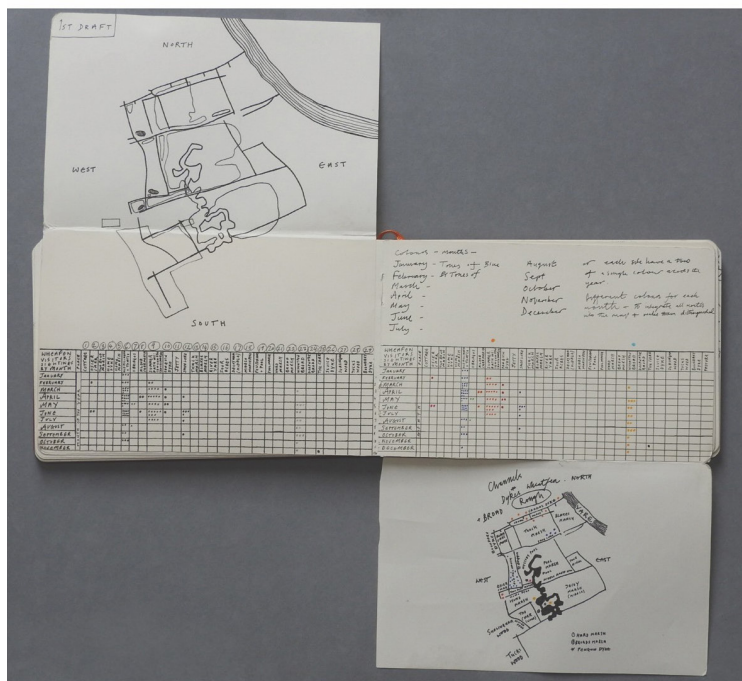
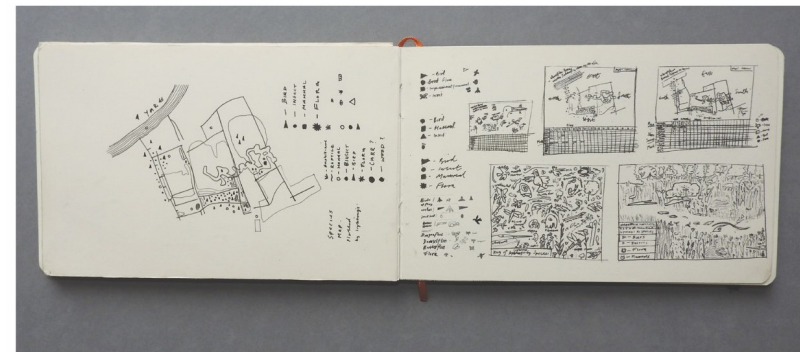
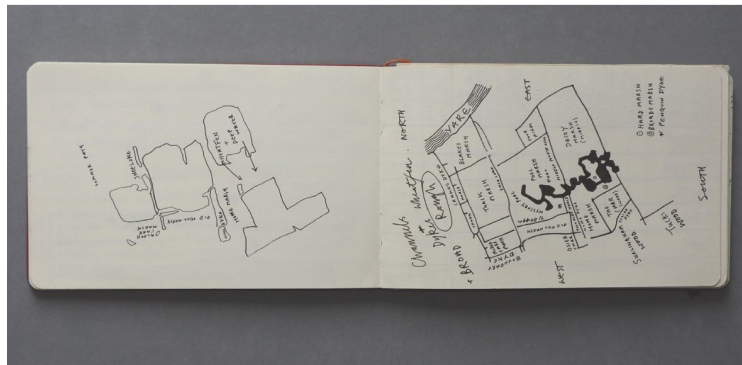


Fig.4 Sketchbook responses to the Wheatfen visitors' books, Mapping Development

Fig.5 Sketchbook development drawings

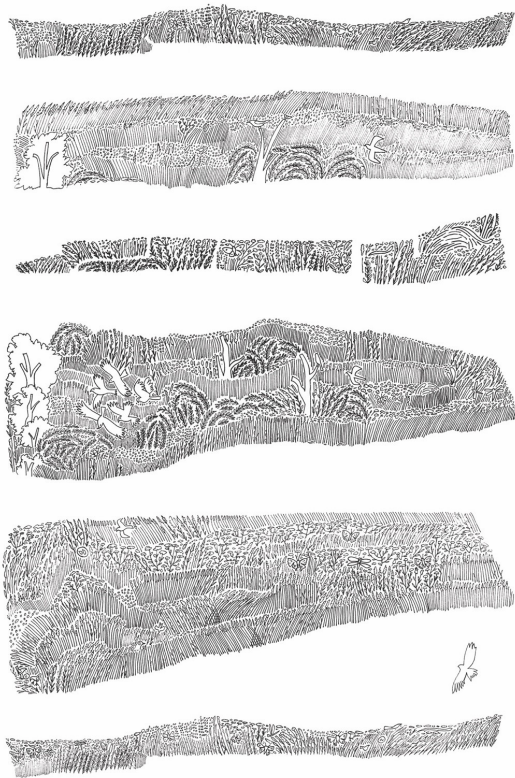


Fig.6 Development Drawing, The shape of the Broad Reeds, Sedge and Meadow

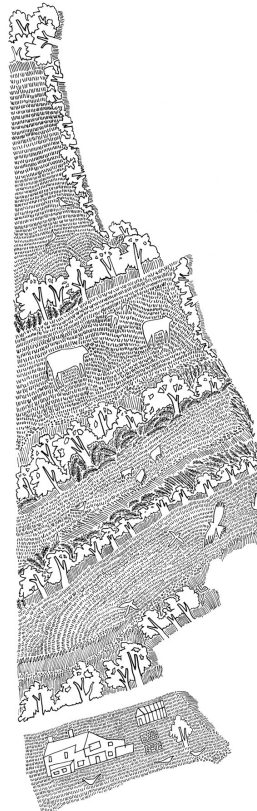


Fig.7 Development Drawing, The shape of the Broad, Pasture

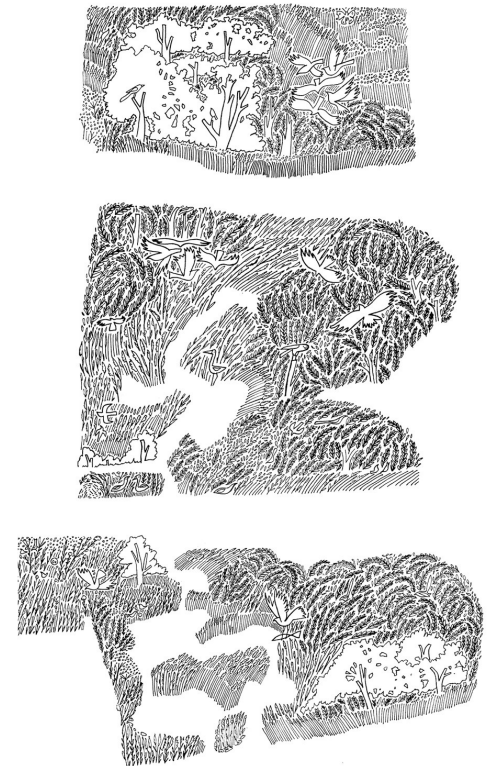


Fig.8 Development Drawing, The shape of the Broad, Old Mill Marsh

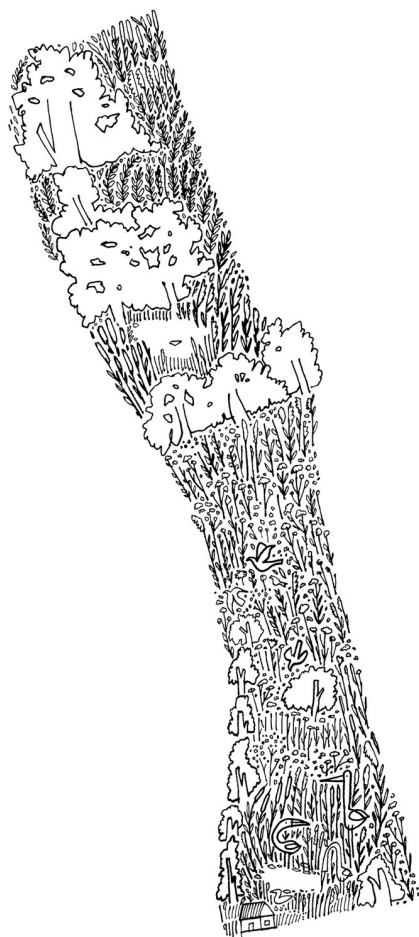


Fig.9 Development Drawing, The shape of the Broad, Fen Channels

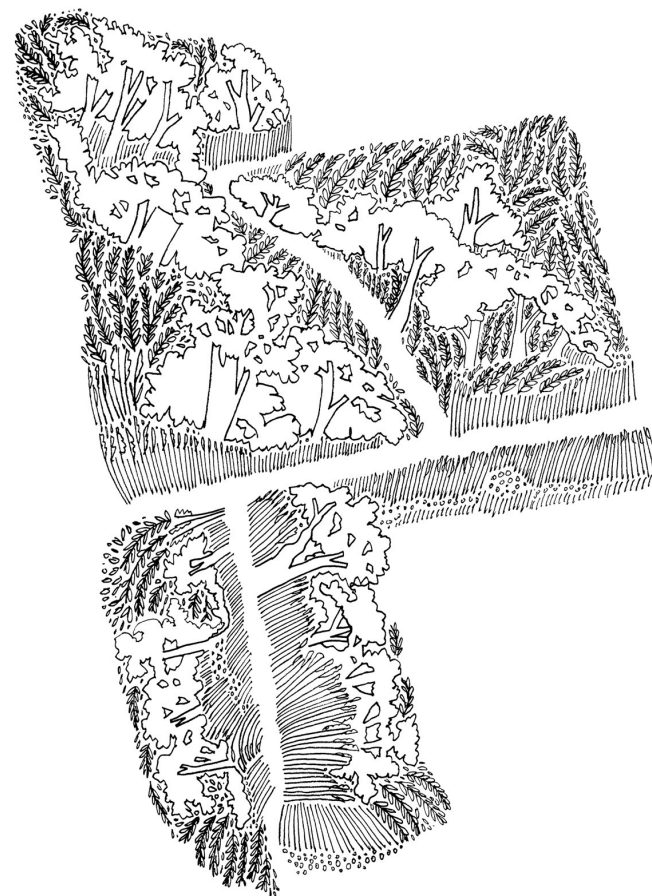


Fig.10 Development Drawing, The shape of the Broad, Woodland Carr (Tucks Wood)

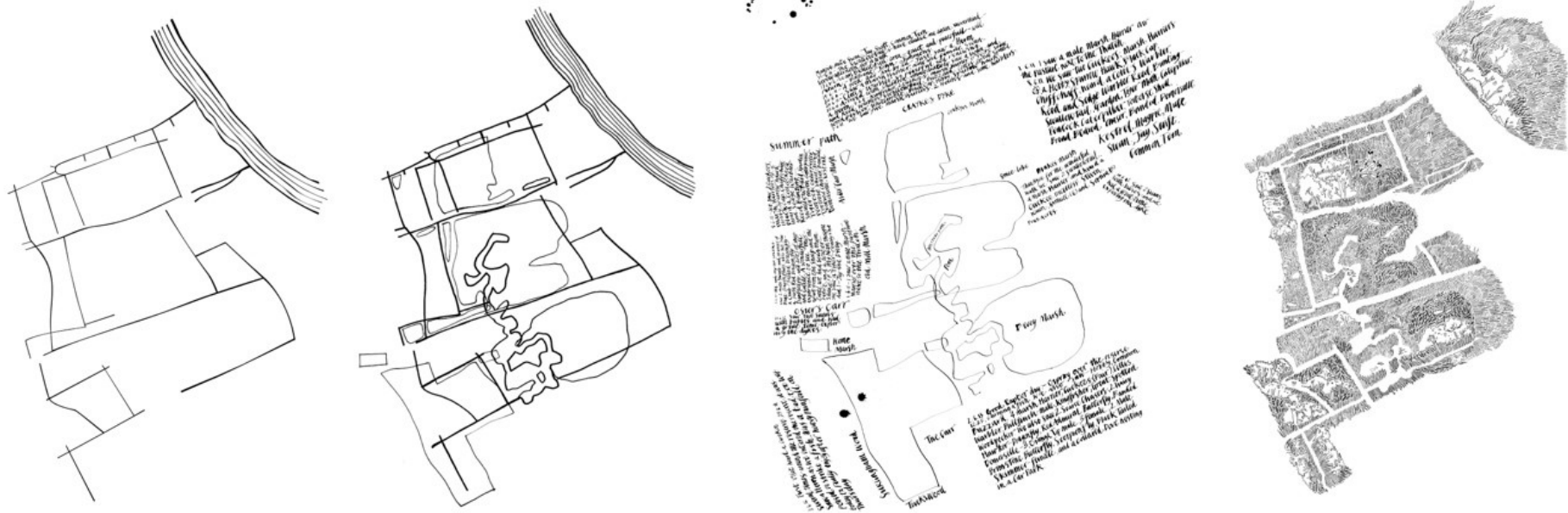


Fig.11 Map stages of development, The shape of the Broad, Wheatfen Nature Reserve Map with handwritten comments



Fig.12 Final Preliminary Map Drawing, Landscape shaped by Dykes and Channels

3. RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Brewerton used an illustrator's investigative drawing process to further develop a naturalist's method of recording an ecosystem, thereby bringing together a range of material and data in work that visualises experience of a specific environment. The outcome is a visual language and method of mapping and drawing that aims to connect audiences to landscape in new ways and enhance lives by engagement with the natural world.

Mapping the Broads consists of a body of drawings, and a film.

9 x A2, 6 x A1, 5 x A0 Pen and Ink Drawings – 20 drawings in total

1 strip of wallpaper design

1 A5 sketchbook

Book: 'Yare, Polkey's and Halvergate – An Illustrated Visit' - 56pp

Documentary Film: Reconnecting with Nature - 9 minutes 24 seconds duration. <https://vimeo.com/481699942/7e1ccfed53>

The work was created between 2017 – 2020

Wheatfen Nature Reserve Visitors Book Recorded Sightings in June 2011-2018		Birds and Raptors		Insects		Mammals		Reptiles and Amphibians		Plants		Fungi		Other		Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	Alder Carr Marsh																
2	Blakes Marsh																
3	Boundary Dyke																
4	The Cottage																
5	Crookes Marsh																
6	Crookes Dyke																
7	Deep Marsh																
8	Deep Water																
9	Deep Water Marsh																
10	Eleven Bridges																
11	Fen Channel																
12	Four Acre Marsh																
13	Hard Marsh																
14	Home Marsh																
15	Middle Marsh Dyke																
16	Old Mill Marsh																
17	Oster Carr																
18	Pennon Dyke																
19	Pool Marsh																
20	River Sme																
21	Shute Dyke																
22	Shute Dyke																
23	Sunflower Field																
24	Sunflower Field																
25	The Carr																
26	The Thatch																
27	The Thatch																
28	The Thatch																
29	The Thatch																
30	Wheatfen Broad																
Total		2	1	4	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	2	5	2	1	1	1

Fig.13 Wheatfen Broad, Sightings recorded in the month of June 2011 to 2018



1-6-11 We and My two Cousins saw two mite Swans and masses of Blue Dragonflies also we saw a Cub-Tailed Dragonfly - a large Red Dragonfly, Damselfly, and lots of Sheep and Cattle. A wonderful experience to see this - apart from the Sheep 1 and the Cattle we had seen them before, and a water snake. P.S. My Nan thought she saw a Tiger really she did 1-Jay and Dilly.

1-6-11 I saw a male Marsh Harrier as the rusted note to the Thrush 2

2-6-13 Good Raptor day - Osprey over the reserve carrying a fish 3.

12-25 4 We saw a Hobby, Common Buzzard, 4 Marsh Harrier, Cuckoos (four) Collared Warbler, Bullfinch, male, Kingfisher, Great spotted Woodpecker, we also saw 2. Hairy Woodpecker, Dragonfly, Red Admiral, Butterfly, Panded. Pansicle 3, Orange Tip 3 female, 2. Nite Primrose Butterfly, Scorpionfly, Black Tailed Skimmer female, 2. Source Chasers, and a catbird. Dove nesting in a Car Park.

4-6-11 Kingfisher, two Cuckoos, Marsh Harrier ♂♂ & ♀♀, 2. Kent and Sedge Warbler, Swallowtail, Buzzard, Cuckoo, Great spotted Woodpecker, Black Cap, Hobby.

5-6-11 We saw two Cuckoos, Marsh Harrier ♂ & a Hobby Sparrow Hawk, Black Cap, Chiffchaff, heard a Cuckoo Warbler, Kent and Sedge Warbler, Red. Panded, Redstart, Magpie, Mute Swan, Jay, 2. Snipe, Common Tern, Swallowtail, Garden Tiger Moth, Caterpillar 7, Peacock Caterpillar, 5. Tortoise Shell, Broad. Panded, chaser, 1. Panded, Pansicle, 16.



10-6-12 Thank you for the wonderful walk we saw 2 swallowtail, 12 Marsh Harrier and heard a Cuckoo, Pansicle, Steven, Koen, Samuel, 16 and Sophia 15)

10-6-12 We saw 5 Marsh Harrier, 2 Herons and some warblers.

10-6-12 Saw two swans with babies 12 and had a great time exploring the dykes.

15-6-11 The Swallowtail's have eluded me again. Nevermind - berey afternoon for a walk.

16-6-12 We saw lots of Dragonflies, Damselfly and Caterpillars. 15 Emily saw a Great Crested Grebe, 14 Dragonflies, and a thick hairy caterpillar.

17-6-13 Swallowtail in flight at about 12.30pm. 12

2-1-13 Swallowtails flying over the Summer Path.

23-6-12 Was a tad too wet today to really enjoy after heavy rainfall on Thursday.

25-6-11 Saw a Heron as we entered the reserve, poised to strike a fish. 16

26-6-13 Mid Summer Swallowtails at 6.00pm saw a Swallowtail flying at Smee Lake. 7

26-6-13 We saw a Grass snake on a path close to the River Xare. 18

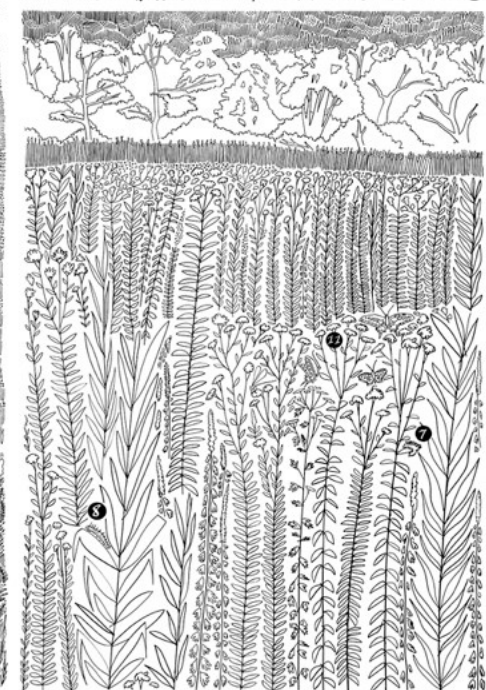


Fig.14 A Visual map of the Wheatfen Broad visitors' books, Junes 2011-2018

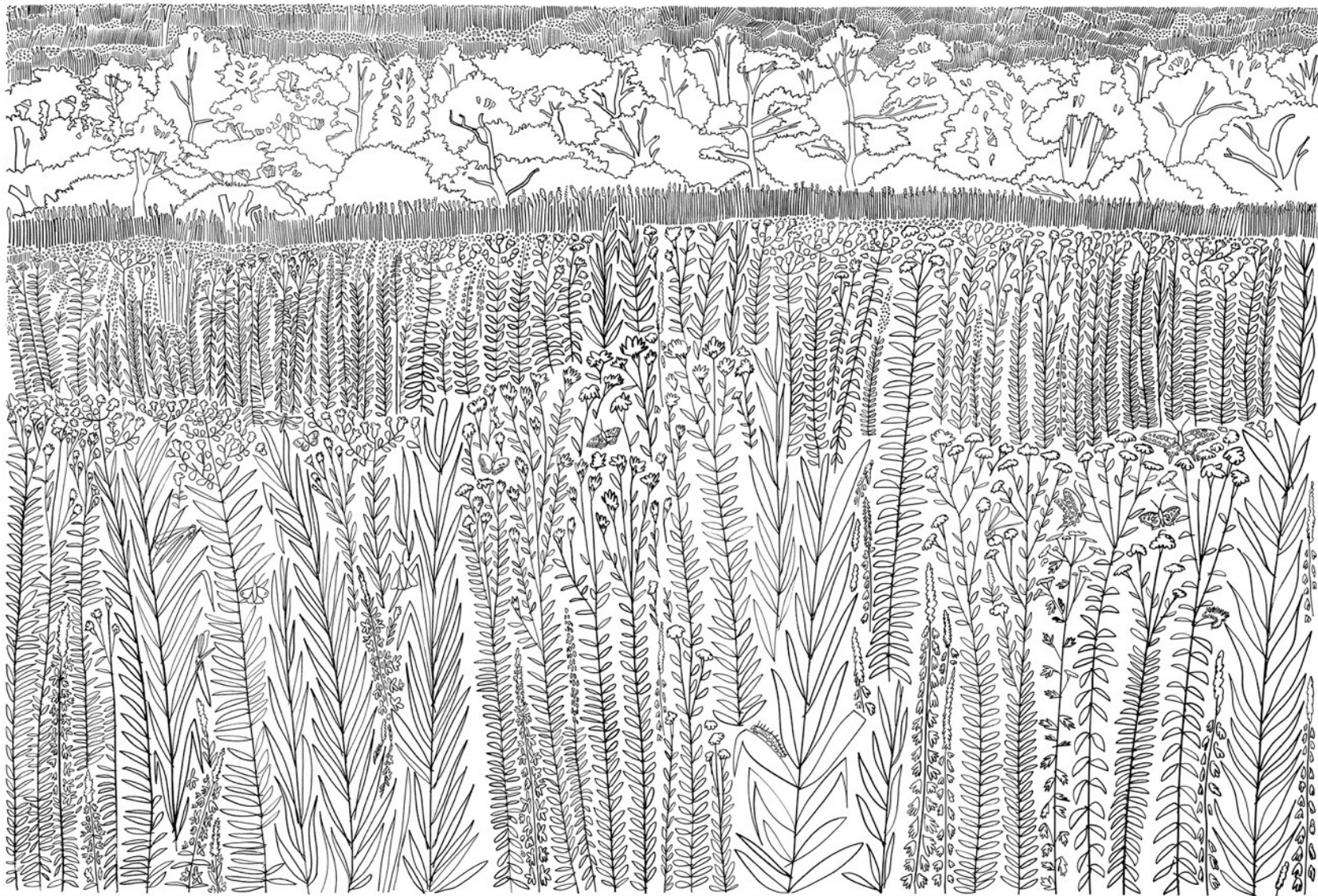


Fig.15 Old Mill Marsh, Meadow

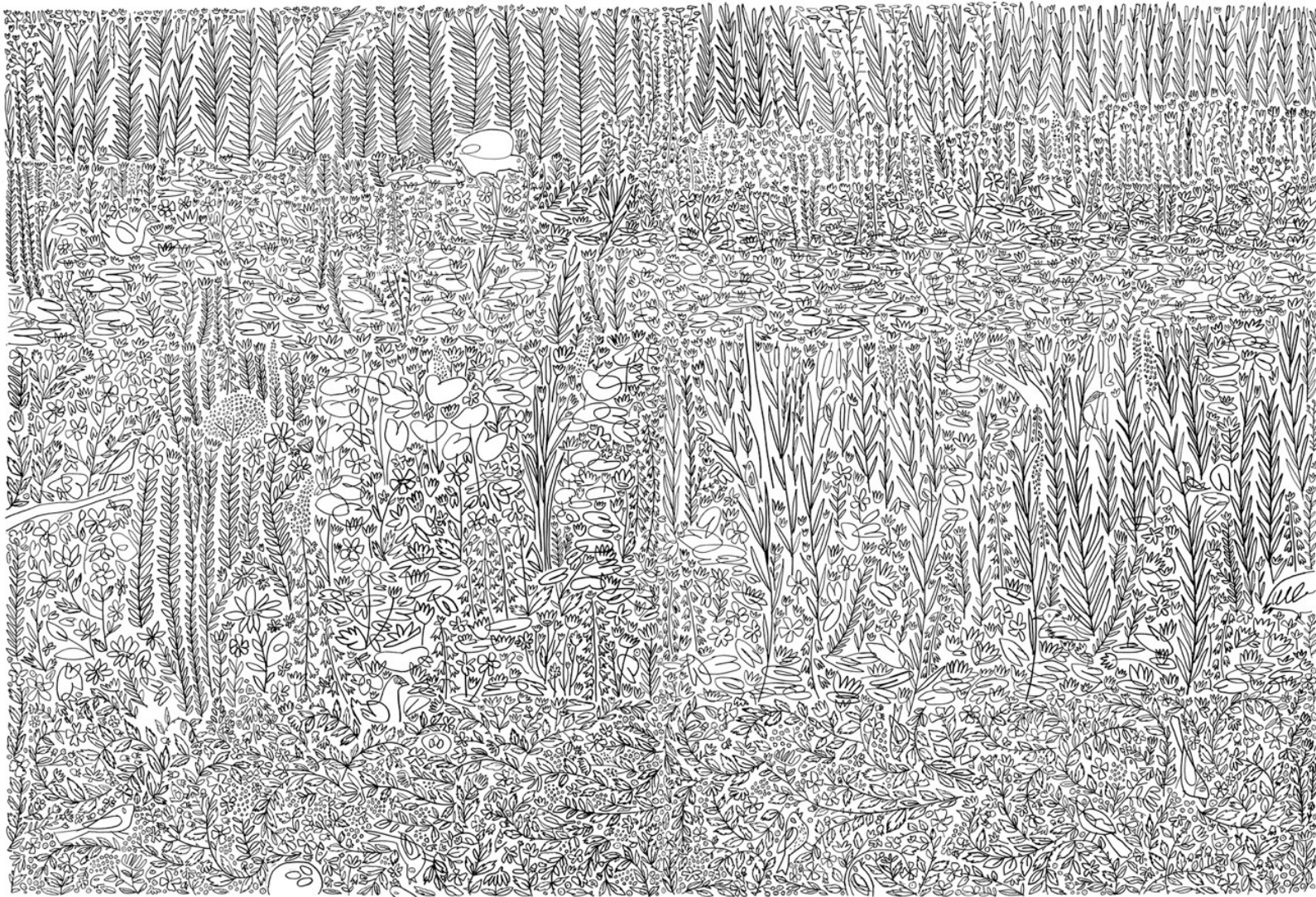


Fig.16 Coot in Penguin Dyke

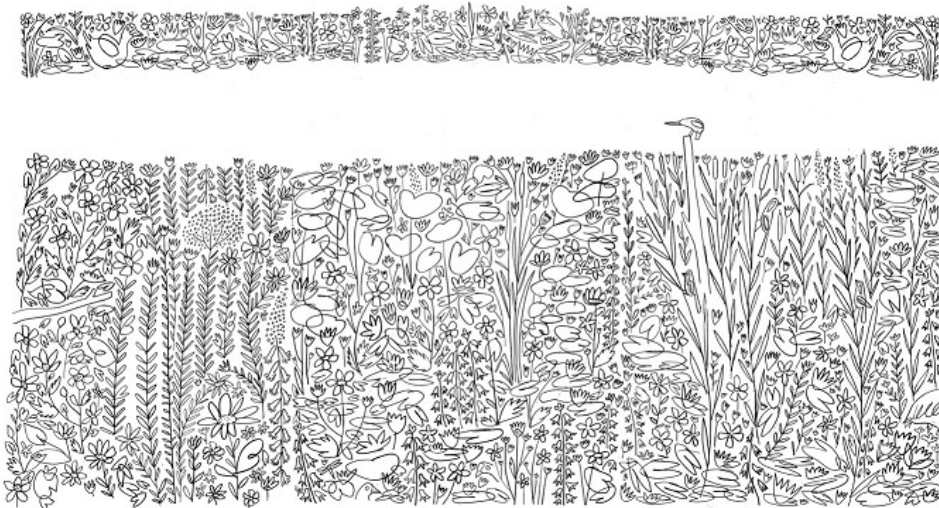


Fig.17 Kingfisher near the Jetty

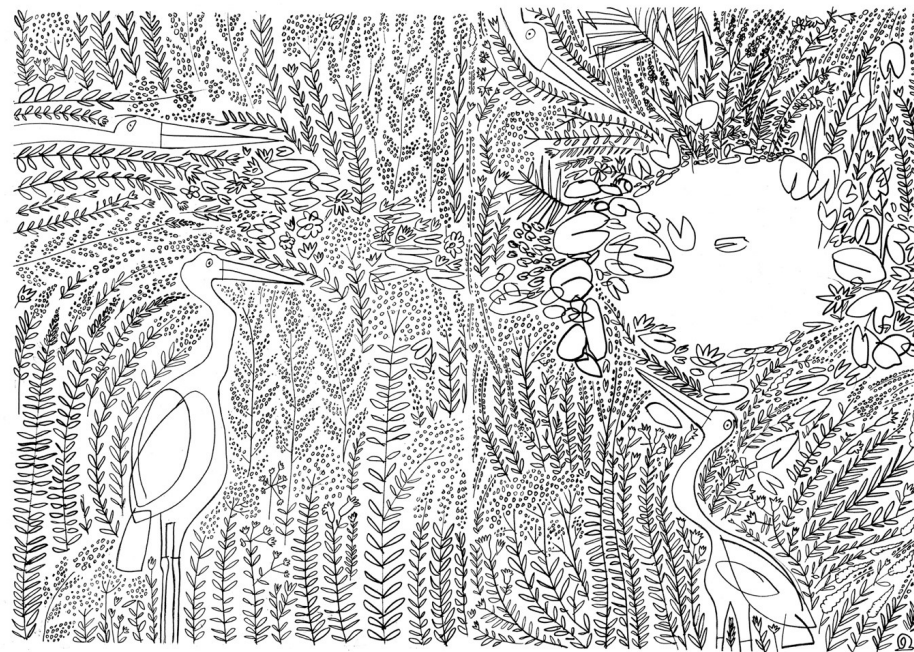


Fig.18 Heron Poised to Catch a Fish

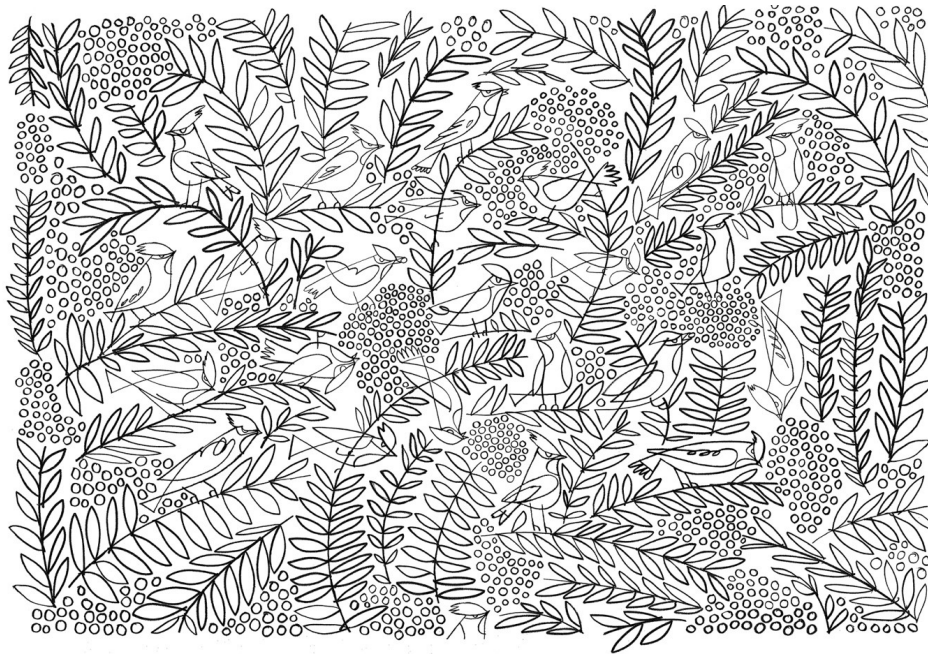


Fig.19 Twenty-three Waxwings gathered on a Rowan Tree, December

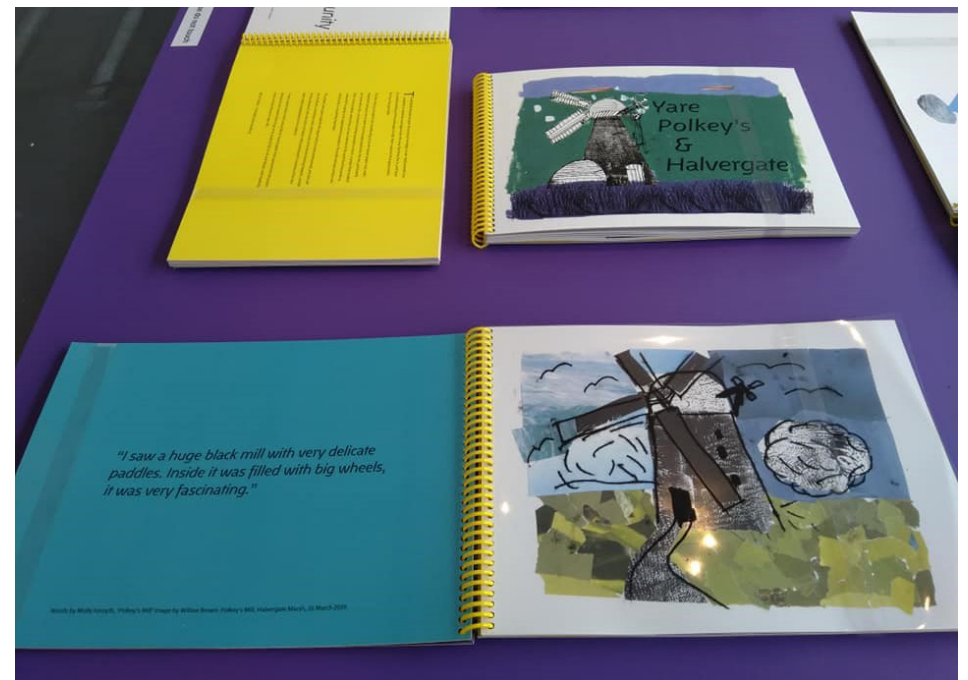


Fig.20 Yare, Polkey's and Halvergate – An Illustrated Visit

4. DISSEMINATION

The work was exhibited in *Mapping the Broads*, East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts, (28 Jan – 14 March 2020). The exhibition recorded 1346 visits during the seven weeks of the show and included events for school groups, academics and members of the public.

Brewerton presented the research in the academic paper: “Reconnecting with Nature”, *New Perspectives on the Rural: Landscape, Community and Creativity*, Online Research Symposium, Norwich University of the Arts, 16 December 2020.

The drawing ‘June – A visual map of the Wheatfen Broad Visitors Book’ was longlisted for the 2020 Trinity Buoys Wharf Drawing Prize.

The research was presented as an academic poster at the 11th Annual Illustration Research Conference at Kingston University, *Education and Illustration; Models, Methods and Paradigms*, 11-12 February 2021. Originally planned for 5 November 2020.

Brewerton’s images were central to the redesign of the Wheatfen Trust website in late 2020.

<https://www.wheatfen.org> (accessed 18 March 2021)



Fig.21 *Mapping the Broads* exhibition: process drawing, final maps and supporting drawings



Fig.22 *Mapping the Broads* exhibition: process drawings, book and film



Fig.23 *Mapping The Broads* exhibition: final outcome, maps and supporting drawings, visitors sightings Junes 2011-2018



Fig.24 *Mapping The Broads* exhibition: wallpaper & film



Fig.25 Reconnecting with Nature project poster

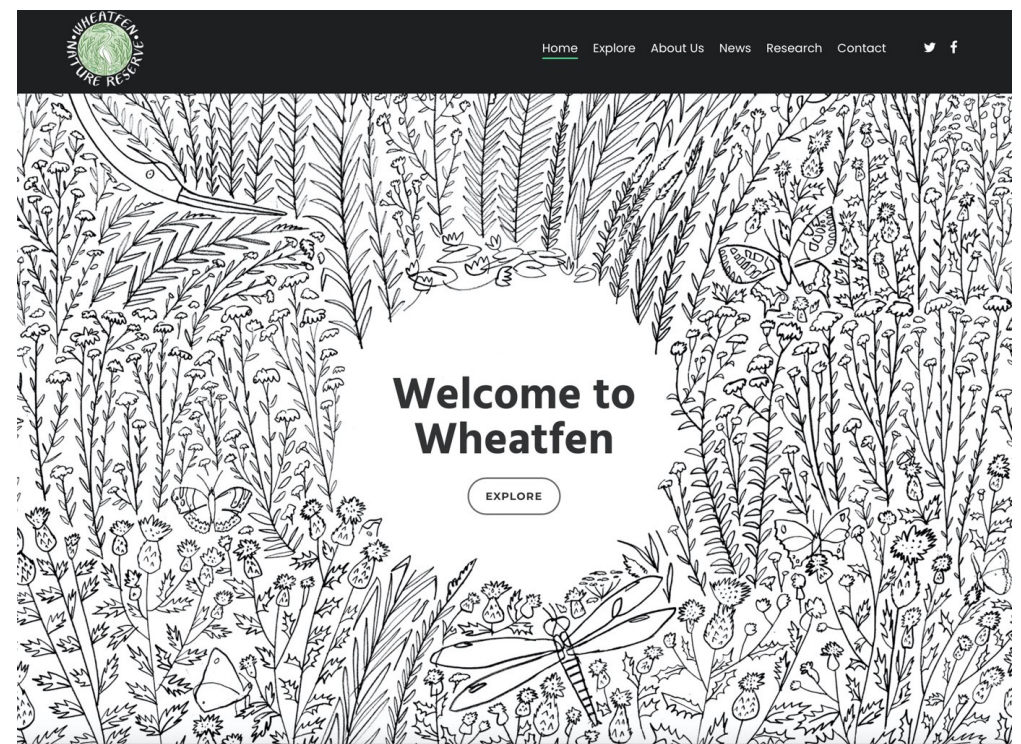


Fig.26 Wheatfen Nature Reserve website



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